

A SAFER ROAD TO TOMORROW

September 2016

New Hampshire has Third Highest Increase in Motor Vehicle Deaths in U.S.

The National Safety Council recently released a report on motor vehicle fatalities between January and June of 2016. The report showed a 9% increase nationally from the corresponding period in 2015. The January through June 2016 figure was up 18% from the 2014 figure. This increase was attributed to effects of low gas prices, which produced a 3% increase in cumulative vehicle mileage through May.

The report also showed New Hampshire having a 61% increase in deaths between January and June, the third highest in the country. However, safety experts and law enforcement officials in the state warn against reading too far into the large increase, as NH has unique factors in these numbers that go beyond the economic trends. In a recent article by the Union Leader, experts explained that the most common cause of traffic fatalities is alcohol or drug impairment, followed by distracted driving and excessive speed. It should also be noted that New Hampshire is the only state in the country that does not have an adult seatbelt law. In more than two-thirds of fatal accidents in 2016, victims were not wearing seatbelts. To top it off, an unseasonably warm winter increased the amount of drivers on the road this year with less snowbanks to “cushion” vehicles veering off the road.

While many of New Hampshire’s accidents occur on interstates, state roads with high speed limits and two-way traffic are even more dangerous for drivers. The installation of rumble strips and concrete barriers as well as cracking down on distracted driving through the state’s hands-free law are ways the DOT and local law enforcement are trying to prevent accidents on these kinds of roads.

The only states with a higher increase in motor vehicles deaths than New Hampshire was Oregon (70%) and Vermont (82%).

New England Motor Vehicle Deaths, Changes, and Rates over 6 Month Period

State	Deaths Identical Periods			Percent Changes	
	2016	2015	2014	2015-2016	2014-2016
Connecticut	138	95	119	45%	16%
Maine	63	62	60	2%	5%
Massachusetts	179	149	146	20%	23%
New Hampshire	61	38	38	61%	61%
Rhode Island	23	21	23	10%	0%
Vermont	31	19	17	63%	82%
Total U.S.	19,100	17,530	16,251	9%	18%



A SAFER ROAD
TO TOMORROW

Safety · Quality of Life · Economic Development

Safer Road Partners

Associated General Contractors of New Hampshire

The Associated General Contractors is a non-profit trade organization of general contractors, subcontractors, and industry professionals dedicated to improving industry standards.

NH Good Roads Association

NH Good Roads Association is a non-profit trade organization established to encourage the development of a safe, efficient and environmentally sound highway transportation system.

Safety and Health Council of Northern New England

The Council’s mission is to educate and promote safety & health policies, practices and procedures that prevent and mitigate human economic losses arising from unintended causes.

NH Association of Chiefs of Police

The Association secures a close relationship among commanding officers all over the state, to encourage a cooperative relationship among all police officials.

NH Lodging & Restaurant Association

The Association is a non-partisan organization to promote, protect and educate the food service and lodging industries and to ensure positive business growth for our members.

Business & Industry Association

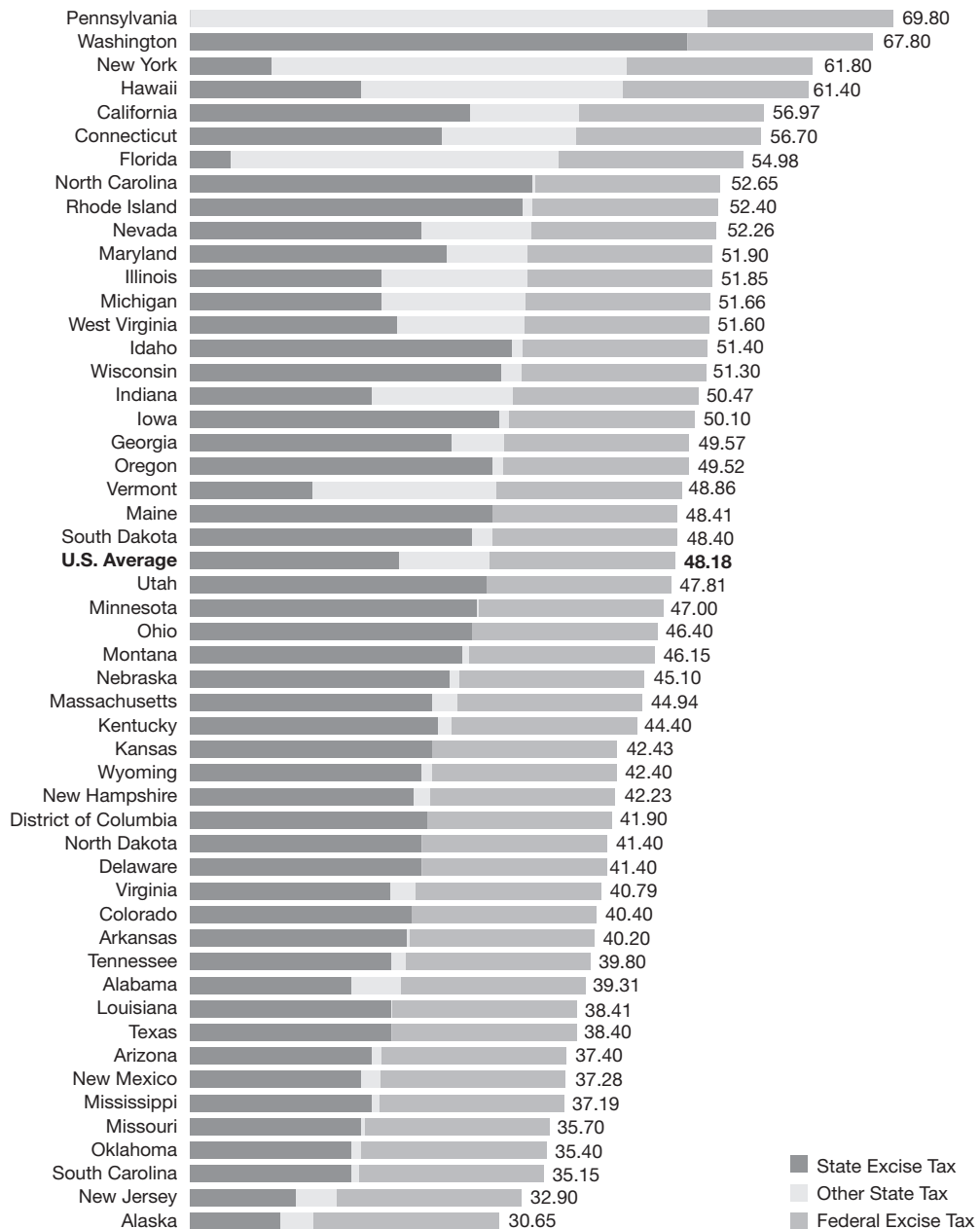
The Association is NH’s leading business trade association. It advocates for business interests with state and federal legislators and regulators.

New Hampshire's Motor Fuel Taxes Remain Among Lowest in the Country

According to a chart prepared by the American Petroleum Institute (API), as of July 2016, the US average for motor fuel taxes is 48.18 cents. New Hampshire falls significantly below the national average, at 42.23 cents, and remains the lowest rate in New England. Despite the four cent increase implemented in 2014, the financial needs of New Hampshire's road and bridges continue to surpass the revenue as reflected in the Ten Year Transportation Plan passed by legislators.

Nationally, New Hampshire has the 19th lowest rate over all. At 56.70 cents, Connecticut has the highest rate in New England and the 6th highest in the country. All of the New England states collect more motor fuel taxes than New Hampshire.

Gasoline Motor Fuel Taxes as of July 1, 2016



New TRIP Publication Emphasizes Improving NH's Transportation System for Economic Growth



In a fact sheet released this past August, The Road Information Program (TRIP) highlighted the close relationship between improved highways and economic growth. TRIP is a private nonprofit organization that researches, evaluates and distributes economic and technical data on surface transportation issues. The publication explains how now that New Hampshire and the nation are rebounding from the recession, improvements to roads, bridges, and public transit could provide a significant economic boost by creating jobs and stimulating long-term economic growth by way of enhanced mobility and access. The fact sheet also argues that while the FAST Act signed by the president last year is a step in the right direction, it will not provide enough revenue to meet the needs of the nation's roads and bridges. Once the legislation expires in 2020, the Congressional Budget Office projects the average

annual deficit to the federal Highway Trust Fund will be upwards of \$18 billion.

Below are some other points highlighted by the TRIP fact sheet:

Federal Funding for Our Nation's Surface Transportation System Generates Jobs; Making Needed Highway Improvements Assures Economic Recovery and Growth

- Enhancing critical transportation assets will boost the economy in the short-term by creating jobs in construction and related fields. In the long-term these improvements will enhance economic competitiveness and improve the quality of life for the state's residents and visitors by reducing travel delays and transportation costs, improving access and mobility, improving safety, and stimulating sustained job growth.
- The 2015 AASHTO Transportation Bottom Line Report found that annual investment in the nation's roads, highways and bridges needs to increase from \$88 billion to \$120 billion and from \$17 billion to \$43 billion in the nation's public transit systems, to improve conditions and meet the nation's mobility needs. The report also found that the current backlog in needed road, highway and bridge improvements is \$740 billion.
- The Federal Highway Administration estimates that each dollar spent on road, highway and bridge improvements results in an average benefit of \$5.20 in the form of reduced vehicle maintenance costs, reduced delays, reduced fuel consumption, improved safety, reduced road and bridge maintenance costs and reduced emissions as a result of improved traffic flow.
- A 2015 survey of corporate executives by Area Development Magazine listed highway accessibility as the number two site selection factor, behind only the availability of skilled labor.
- Sixty-three percent of the \$38 billion worth of commodities delivered annually from sites in New Hampshire is transported by trucks on the state's highways. An additional 26 percent is delivered by parcel, U.S. Postal Service or courier, which use multiple modes, including highways.

Current Road and Bridge Conditions, Travel Trends and Traffic Congestion

- Seven percent of New Hampshire's major roads are in poor condition. Driving on roads in need of repair costs New Hampshire motorists \$340 million a year in extra vehicle repairs and operating costs – \$317 per motorist.
- Thirty-one percent of New Hampshire's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.
- Fifty-two percent of New Hampshire's urban Interstates experience congestion during peak hours. Traffic congestion costs American motorists \$121 billion a year in wasted time and fuel costs.
- Americans rely almost exclusively on motor vehicles for mobility. Travel in private vehicles accounts for 88 percent of all person miles of travel. Air travel accounts for eight percent of all person miles of travel, while transit (including buses and trains) accounts for one percent.
- Vehicle travel on New Hampshire's highways increased by eight percent from 2000 to 2014. New Hampshire's population grew by eight percent between 2000 and 2015.
- Vehicle travel on America's highways increased by 10 percent from 2000 to 2014, while new road mileage increased by only five percent. The nation's population grew by 14 percent from 2000 to 2015.



A Safer Road to Tomorrow
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Federal Budget Prediction Underscores Need to Fix Highway Trust Fund

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) recently released its annual midyear update of budget and economic forecasts. Overall, the CBO report projects growing federal deficits over the next ten years with discretionary spending being squeezed by spending on mandatory programs (social security and healthcare) and paying interest on the national debt. CBO also foresees a drop in projected Highway Trust Fund (HTF) excise tax revenue of \$1.4 billion over the period of the FAST Act (FY 2016-2020) due largely to estimated truck purchases and the usage tax on heavy trucks.

With the HTF becoming more reliant on the general fund over the past eight years, the CBO report is of particular concern. Specifically, as mandatory spending becomes a greater part of the federal budget, discretionary dollars that have kept the fund afloat since 2008 will be even harder to come by. The long-term budget forecast further emphasizes the need for our federal highway and transit programs to become less reliant on the general fund and helps prove why Congress needs to find a permanent fix to the HTF.

Furthermore, the \$70 billion transferred into the HTF as part of the 2015 surface transportation program reauthorization will be liquidated in FY 2020. Waiting until that point to address the trust fund revenue shortfall would result in a nearly \$18 billion average annual shortfall between existing revenue and the amount needed to prevent cuts in highway and public transportation spending. Presently, 31 national association and construction trade union members of the Transportation Construction Coalition (TCC) are advocating to enact a permanent solution for the Highway Trust Fund's structural revenue deficit.

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